The Mises Review

VOLUME 8 NUMBER 1 SPRING 2002

No Safety in Numbers

Democracy—The God That Failed

HANS-HERMANN HOPPE
TRANSACTION PUBLISHERS, 2001
XXIV + 304 PGS.

Classical liberals view the state with suspicion; indeed some, of whom Murray Rothbard and Hans Hoppe are examples, wish to do away with it altogether. However convincing the arguments for private-property anarchism, we now live in a world of states. Given this fact, what kind of state is best? If, as Albert Jay Nock famously said, the state is our enemy, which regime threatens us least? Many have looked to democracy, but Professor Hoppe dissents.

In his view, democracy has led to the increase in state power that classical liberals deplore: "I will explain the rapid growth of state power in the twentieth century lamented by Mises and Rothbard as the systematic outcome of democracy and the democratic

FAITH IN MAMMON
ROBERT H. NELSON
Economics as Religion: From Samuelson to Chicago and Beyond 6

THE FOLLY OF NATIONAL UNITY
PATRICK J. BUCHANAN
The Death of the West: How Dying Populations and Immigrant Invasions Imperil Our Country and Civilization 11

ARGUMENT BY AXIOM
GLENN C. LOURY
The Anatomy of Racial Inequality 17

WAR LAID BARE
NOAM CHOMSKY
9-11 21

ROWAN WILLIAMS
Writing in the Dust: After September 11 21

LET GOD SORT THEM OUT
ROBERT D. KAPLAN
Warrior Politics: Why Leadership Demands a Pagan Ethos 24

A Quarterly Review of Books, by David Gordon

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mindset, i.e., the (erroneous) belief in the efficiency and/or justice of public property and popular (majority) rule." Though Mises and Rothbard "were aware of the economic and ethical deficiencies of democracy," they "had a soft spot for democracy and tended to view the transition from monarchy to democracy as progress" (p. xxiii, order of sentences changed).

Monarchy preserves liberty far better than does democracy; and when our author says "monarchy," he means it. He does not have in mind constitutional kingdoms, in the style of contemporary Britain, where the monarch reigns but does not rule. Rather, he refers to the full-fledged kings of the Old Regime, with the Habsburgs as particular favorites.

But how can Hoppe say this? A king rules to benefit himself, and he need answer to no one. In a democracy, by contrast, a government that displeases the people can be replaced. Does not the knowledge that it can be turned out at the next election act to restrain the government now in power?

The MISES REVIEW

PUBLISHED BY THE LUDWIG VON MISES INSTITUTE

Copyright © 2002 by the Ludwig von Mises Institute, 518 West Magnolia Avenue, Auburn, Ala. 36832-4528, (334) 321-2100, fax (334) 321-2119, info@mises.org, www.mises.org. ISSN: 1537-4564. *The Mises Review* subscription is $16.00 U.S. ($25 international) for four issues. All rights reserved. Written permission must be secured from the publisher to use or reproduce any part of *The Mises Review*, except for brief quotations in reviews or articles. The reviewer may be contacted at dgordon@mises.org.

Our author turns on their heads these commonly held beliefs. True enough, a king regards the government as his personal possession; but exactly this will induce him to act with good judgment. Rather than squander his nation's resources, he will manage them prudently, all the more so if he expects to pass on the realm to his heirs. "Assuming no more than self-interest, the ruler tries to maximize his total wealth, i.e., the present value of his estate *and* his current income. He would *not* want to increase current income at the expense of a more than proportional drop in the present value of his assets" (p. 18).

One might at first think the argument proves too little. The ruler may well conserve his own estate; but what about the rest of the country? What stops him from plundering the property of his subjects? To this, Hoppe has an ingenious response. A prosperous and secure society will raise the value of the king's estate; hence, the ruler will have a strong incentive to limit his depredations on the public. "[T]o preserve or even enhance the value of his personal property, he [the king] would systematically restrain himself in his taxing policies, for the lower the degree of taxation, the more productive the subject population will be, and the more productive the population, the higher the value of the ruler's parasitic monopoly of expropriation will be" (p. 19).

This strikes me as an insight of major importance; incidentally, it greatly impressed the distinguished Austrian classical liberal and monarchist,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn. One might, I suppose, adduce a countertendency for the monarch to transfer as much as possible to his private estate. Would not the prosperity of his subjects have to be set against what the king thought he could gain through direct seizure? At least, though, Hoppe has shown that a powerful incentive limits the growth of government in a monarchy. Even Jean Bodin, the great French theorist of absolutism, maintained that the king should, if possible, support himself entirely from his own estates.

In a democracy, by contrast, the government will grab as much as it can, without regard to the future. Precisely because the holders of power do not own the government, they lack the incentive to look to the long run. "A democratic ruler can use the government apparatus to his personal advantage, but he does not own it . . . [h]e owns the *current use* of government resources, but not their capital value. In distinct contrast to a king, a president will want to maximize not total government wealth (capital values and current income), but current income (regardless and at the expense of capital values)" (p. 24).

Again Professor Hoppe anticipates and dispatches an objection. If a democratic government acts as he indicates, will the people not remove it at the next election? The whole point of democracy, after all, is that seekers of power compete for the favor of the majority. Fear of removal will thus check the government's predation.

Unfortunately, as Hoppe notes, a democratic government can render the supposed check nugatory. The rulers buy votes by promising to the poor extravagant welfare benefits. The rich pay the price for these, but their dissatisfaction cannot overturn the government. They number but few compared with the poor whom the government enlists in its support. Thus predation

CALENDAR

WORKSHOP ON ECONOMICS
AND POLITICAL SCIENCE
Fridays, 10:00 A.M.
(see www.mises.org for detailed schedule)

AUSTRIAN SCHOLARS CONFERENCE 8
March 15–16, 2002

HISTORY OF LIBERTY
May 26–31, 2002

HUMAN ACTION CONFERENCE
June 2–8, 2002

ROTHBARD GRADUATE SEMINAR:
THE ETHICS OF LIBERTY
July 28–August 2, 2002

MISES UNIVERSITY 2002
August 4–10, 2002

20th ANNIVERSARY,
"THE SCHOLARSHIP OF LIBERTY"
CONFERENCE
October 18–19, 2002

For information contact
The Mises Institute
334-321-2100
email: pat@mises.org
web: www.mises.org

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

proceeds unhindered, to the government's own advantage.

One aspect of this strategy of *panem et circenses* deserves special mention, because of its importance in the contemporary United States. If democratic predation depends on support for the government from a large number of poor people, the rulers will naturally wish to add to their numbers. Mass immigration becomes the order of the day. If the new residents have no useful skills, no matter: after a few years, their votes will help to swamp the protests of productive citizens reluctant to give to the state what rightfully belongs to them.

Once again, a monarchy will tend toward an altogether different policy. "[A]s far as *immigration* policy is concerned, a king would want to keep the mob, as well as all people of inferior productive capabilities, out. . . . A king would only permit the immigration of superior or at least above-average people, i.e., those, whose residence in his kingdom would increase his own property value" (p. 143). In sum, monarchs look to the long run, democratic rulers to the short term.

It is hardly a surprise that our author considers the former policy by far the better; and he accordingly recommends that contemporary governments should endeavor to follow as closely as they can the indicated path of the monarch. Several well-known libertarians have thrown up their hands in horror: does not Hoppe here betray the supposed principle of "open borders"? How can he in conscience support action by the government?

Here once more Hoppe has arrived at a fundamental insight. In the ideal libertarian state of affairs, all property is private. Each owner is free to decide who may enter his property. If so, Hoppe asks, is not the cry of "open borders" the very antithesis of proper policy? In a free society, you cannot go wherever you please; to say that is to legitimize trespass.

Proponents of unrestricted immigration will not be swayed. Granted, they will say, that you cannot rightfully "immigrate" to someone's property without his permission, why does it follow that the government may close the borders of public property? To object to Hoppe in this way, as it seems to me, is precisely to miss the point of his argument. He has endeavored to show that "open borders" is not a libertarian principle, not to deduce his own prescription. If he is right, libertarian theory leaves undetermined what course should be followed if public property exists. Nothing in morality then bars the government from being

Hoppe has endeavored to show that "open borders" is not a libertarian principle.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

guided by the prudential considerations Hoppe has cited.

Professor Hoppe has made a strong case; but in one respect, I am not entirely clear what sort of claim he is making. In the book's introduction, he launches a vigorous defense of the a priori: "If one is to make a rational choice among . . . rival and incompatible interpretations, this is only possible if one has a theory at one's disposal, or at least a theoretical proposition, whose validity does not depend on historical experience but can be established a priori, i.e., by means of the intellectual apprehension or comprehension of the nature of things" (p. xv, emphasis omitted).

The choice between monarchy and democracy concerns a choice between two defective social orders.

From this statement, we know that Hoppe thinks that his claims about monarchy and democracy cannot be established by purely empirical means, since these claims are historical interpretations. But does he think that his evaluations of monarchy and democracy are themselves a priori propositions, or is he content to accord them some less certain status? He may mean that a priori truths, e.g., that high taxation cannot cause prosperity, help to render likely his assessments of monarchy and democracy. On this construal, the assessments need not themselves count as a priori. I incline to think that his case is stronger if one adopts the latter view.

I hope that in future work Professor Hoppe will address these questions: If monarchy is the best form of government, what sort of monarchy is desirable? What about systems that combine monarchical and democratic features? Do these surpass monarchy, or do they suffer from debilitating flaws?

Though he prefers monarchy to democracy, our author does not enlist in royalist ranks. Quite the contrary, he opposes the state altogether. "Indeed, a monopolist of ultimate decision making equipped with the power to tax does not just produce less and lower quality justice, but he will produce more and more 'bads,' i.e., injustice and aggression. Thus, the choice between monarchy and democracy concerns a choice between two defective social orders" (p. xx).

Our author goes so far as to ascribe the failure of classical liberalism to ignorance of this fundamental fact. Nineteenth-century classical liberals, and their latter-day successors, for the most part pursued the chimera of limited government; this was their "central and momentous error" (p. 224).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Government by nature tends to expand.

Hoppe goes further. He holds that if one accepts the rights of self-ownership and private property, understood in a Rothbardian way, one cannot acknowledge the legitimacy of a protection agency with monopoly power to enforce rights. "[S]uch a monopoly-contract would imply that every private property owner had surrendered his right to ultimate decision making and the protection of his person and property permanently to someone else. In effect, in transferring this right onto someone else, a person would submit himself into permanent slavery" (p. 227).

People who consent to a monopoly state have put themselves at grave risk of losing their freedom.

Certainly a contract of the type Hoppe imagines is not licit, but I am not sure that this point altogether suffices to put limited government out of court. Someone with Rothbardian natural rights can legitimately hire a protection agency to defend himself; in doing so, he need not surrender his right to self-defense. Why does this change if there is only one protection agency? But this is a quibble of minor importance. On the main practical point, Hoppe is surely right. People who consent to a monopoly state have put themselves at grave risk of losing their freedom. In helping us to see this, Hans Hoppe has rendered us a great service, one of many in this work of outstanding merit. ✦

Faith in Mammon

Economics as Religion: From Samuelson to Chicago and Beyond

Robert H. Nelson
Penn State Press, 2001
xxvi + 378 pgs.

Paul Samuelson has been called many things in his long career, but never before to my knowledge a theologian. But according to Robert Nelson in this excellent book, modern economics is bound inextricably with religion; and he takes Samuelson, the most influential American economist of the years after World War II, as a prime example of his thesis. By no means, though, does he confine his analysis to Samuelson. Frank Knight's work, much more to Nelson's liking, emphasized different theological themes. At first sight, Nelson's view seems paradoxical to the point of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

absurdity: is not modern economics in essence scientific and mathematical? How then can it be religious?

One answer is to say, like Cornelius Van Til, that all disciplines are religious; but Nelson does not adopt this view. Is not Nelson, then, flying in the face of patent facts? Samuelson explicitly aimed at an economics modeled on the physical sciences: "Like most other professional economists, Samuelson presents his work, as he states in the first edition [of his textbook] in 1948, as a 'science' in the same category as 'physical or biological sciences.' . . . Samuelson believes that 'there is only one valid reality in a given economic situation' and professional economists are uniquely capable of revealing it. Ethical questions, however, belong in a separate realm, where subjective factors may dominate" (p. 49, quoting Samuelson). What could possibly be less religious than this? If physics is not religious, why is economics?

Nelson does not deny that Samuelson and his many neoclassical followers have devised elaborate mathematical models. But they do not stop with these. Quite the contrary, they believe that these models enable experts to guide a nation to prosperity; and here is where religion enters the scene. Nelson uses "religion" in a broad sense, so that any use of fundamental value judgments counts as "religious." The models cannot be applied in the way Samuelson and his cohorts wish, absent certain value-impregnated assumptions, and Samuelson's economics thus qualifies as religious.

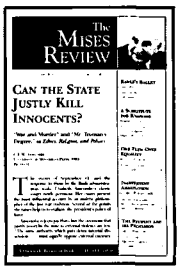
A typical neoclassical economist would at this point leap up in anger. True enough, he will say, economists make, in practice, innocuous value judgments—e.g., "unemployment is bad" and "prosperity is good"—but these hardly affect the scientific character of their discipline. Nelson dissents, and shows to great effect that the neoclassical school cannot easily escape controversial "religious" views. We shall see later, though, that the imagined reply can be used by Austrians to deflect Nelson's critique.

Nelson sets the stage for his account of Samuelson by calling to mind the economists of the Progressive Era. Like Murray Rothbard, he thinks that postmillennial Christianity influenced economists such as Richard Ely to think that they could help bring about the Kingdom of God on earth through rational planning.[1] But even the more secularly minded economists of that time saw themselves as leaders of a new world order.

Our author finds Thorstein Veblen a perfect example. "Thus, as Veblen

[1]Nelson cites Rothbard on the secularized messianism of Marxism, but misses his work on postmillennial pietism (pp. 24–25).

Subscription to *The Mises Review* is $16.00 U.S. ($25.00 Intl.) for four issues.



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Central planning, far from having quasi-divine virtues, must inevitably fail.

would write, control over the productive system should be assumed by 'Production Engineers' and 'Production Economists.' . . . As the 'keepers of the community's material welfare,' they would be motivated not by a 'commercial interest,' but by a 'common purpose.' . . . Professional groups were thus to be the new priesthood of progressive religion" (p. 45).

A problem thwarted these economists' ambitious aims. Central planning, far from having quasi-divine virtues, must inevitably fail. Would not economists who shared the grandiose ambitions of the progressives have to give up in despair? Samuelson found an escape. In his view, the elite could incorporate into their plans much more of the free market than had been previously thought possible or desirable. But to do this did not entail abandoning the goal of a directed society, since elite economists remained necessary. They had to fine-tune the economy, in Keynesian fashion, to prevent undue unemployment and inflation.

Nelson includes some excellent pages showing that Keynes himself fully shared the messianic mindset of the progressives. "Like the early followers of Jesus in biblical times, Keynes thought that the arrival of the kingdom of heaven on earth was near at hand, to occur in perhaps one hundred years or so" (p. 31).

But our objection recurs. Even if Nelson has correctly identified Samuelson's social goals, how does this show that his economic theory is in any way religious? Why is the analysis of more than biographical interest? Nelson responds that value judgments lie at the heart of neoclassical economics.

Basic to Samuelson's fine-tuning plans is the use of deficit finance, which involves paying interest from one group of people to another. For Samuelson, internal debt has little importance. "Thus, most students were left with the simple idea that the national debt need be no concern because it is simply transferring money from one part of society to another. . . . This vision again is best regarded, not as an economic argument of substance,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

but an implicit value statement, another metaphor in the progressive poetry of *Economics* [Samuelson's textbook]. Samuelson was implicitly saying that all Americans are united in one organic whole" (p. 95). In support of his view, Nelson notes that, "tucked away in an appendix," Samuelson notes "major technical problems" with deficit finance (p. 94).

Nelson locates another, and much more pervasive, value judgment involved in Samuelson's account of the economy. Samuelson maintains that the market, if adequately fine-tuned, best promotes efficiency, and is for that reason desirable; but here, surely, is no value-free, purely descriptive statement. "In the implicit theology of *Economics*, that which is good is now that which is efficient; conversely, evil is defined to be that which is inefficient. Samuelson is the heir to the progressive value system, often characterized by historians as the gospel of efficiency" (p. 76).

But has not Nelson here pressed his point too far? Is it really controversial to think efficiency better than its negation? If Nelson wants to call this a value judgment, so be it; but Samuelson's resort to it hardly makes him a theologian. Our author is not yet defeated; he maintains that "efficiency" is a much more value-loaded concept than at first sight appears.

In their calculations of efficiency, Nelson claims, neoclassicals tend to take for granted that psychic costs and benefits are small. Thus, free trade earns high marks from economists for transfer of resources from less to more efficient uses. But what about those driven out of their jobs by requirements of efficient markets? Even if the "winners" can in good Pareto fashion compensate them for their financial losses, what about the psychic costs to them of the transition to new jobs? Why should these be ignored? And do not so-called "existence values" complicate the matter further? These concern the psychic benefits that some people gain from items in the environment. If these are included in one's calculations, Nelson thinks it much less evident that Samuelsonian policies always promote efficiency. (I believe that Austrians have the resources to answer this point, but of this more later.)

Samuelson is the heir to the progressive value system, often characterized by historians as the gospel of efficiency.

If Nelson's account of Samuelson hits the mark, what should be our response? Should economists endeavor to purge judgments in essence theological from their science? Not at all, our author says. Instead, they should become aware of their religious assumptions; and one economist serves him as a model of the required self-awareness. Frank Knight did not long for a utopia without scarcity, in the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

style of Keynes, nor did he think prosperity unproblematic, like Samuelson.

Though Knight supported the free market, he did not do so because of the abundance of material goods it generated. "Ascetic discipline rather than the pursuit of happiness should guide conduct. [Don] Patinkin recalled from his classroom lectures 'Knight's commenting that from the long-run viewpoint . . . denial of wants was the only way that a definitive adjustment of wants to resources could be achieved'" (p. 131). Nelson maintains that here Knight embraced a secularized version of Calvinism, in spite of his overt opposition to Christianity.

As he sees matters, economics fundamentally reduces to a matter of competing value judgments.

If Knight held the pursuit of wealth in lower esteem than did Samuelson and his school, was not his support for the free market anomalous?[2] After all, socialism has no problem in generating a dearth of consumer goods. Knight's line of reasoning, in Nelson's view, exhibits his theological sophistication. In a way parallel to the Christian doctrine of original sin, which strongly influenced him, Knight maintained that human beings inevitably come into conflict over values.

Faced with such conflict, what can be done? Groups will be tempted to impose their wills on one another, and we seem fated to a perpetual struggle for power. Our best hope out of the impasse, according to Knight, was compromise; and here the free market was the essential instrument. "Rather than seeing competition as a benefit, Knight argues that the advantages of the market should be understood in terms of promoting a 'pattern of cooperation' among people who come together on a non-coercive basis for mutual advantage . . . the market minimizes the role of power in human interactions because in a market 'there are no power relations.' The market enables each person 'to be the judge of his own values and of the use of his own means to achieve them'" (p. 136, quoting Knight).

Nelson seems to me right to prefer Knight to Samuelson, but I think he has not shown the intriguing general thesis of his book to be true. As he sees matters, economics fundamentally reduces to a matter of competing value judgments; we face what Thomas Sowell has called "a conflict of visions." Must economists simply choose the view of the world they prefer, e.g., Knight's application of original sin over Samuelson's millenarianism?

[2]Nelson points out that Milton Friedman and other members of the Chicago School were much closer to Samuelson than to their teacher Knight in their uncritical advocacy of efficiency as a goal.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The author's thesis rests on an insufficient diet of examples. Had he taken into account the Austrian School, he would I think be compelled to recognize that the case for scientific economics is stronger than he has made out. When I first presented his analysis of Samuelson, I suggested a possible line of reply for the neoclassicals: the value judgments that the economist uses are noncontroversial. The defense fell short when we undertook a more detailed account of Samuelson's system. It proved crucially dependent on value judgments very much disputable.

Exactly this defense, as it seems to me, succeeds admirably for Austrian economics. Misesian economics incorporates none of the controversial value judgments so ably exposed by our author in his treatment of Samuelson. Obviously, Austrians do not assume that society is a single organic entity; to the contrary, methodological individualism is a prime tenet of the school.

But does not Mises, like Samuelson and Friedman, assume without argument that wealth maximization is the supreme test of any economic system? No, Mises assumes only the hardly controversial claim that most people prefer a decent standard of life to extreme asceticism or death. In Mises's view, capitalism is the only viable economic system; its main rivals, socialism and syndicalism, collapse into chaos. Neither is there available any intermediate system between socialism and capitalism, since interventionist measures fail from the standpoint of their own advocates. All this Mises claims to show by strictly scientific reasoning.

There is no intermediate system between socialism and capitalism.

Thus, unlike Samuelson, Mises does not assume that psychic benefits or existence values are of little importance, as compared with material goods. He takes for granted only that people want a reasonable minimum of wealth; and one can hardly view this judgment as captive to a theological vision. ✦

The Folly of National Unity

The Death of the West: How Dying Populations and Immigrant Invasions Imperil Our Country and Civilization

Patrick J. Buchanan
St. Martin's Press, 2002
308 pgs.

Pat Buchanan's remarkable book expresses a distinctively nationalist thesis; and, as a conscientious

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

reviewer in good standing, I shall of course say something about it. But it is on a subordinate part of this thesis that I propose to concentrate. Mr. Buchanan maintains that traditional Western values have been undermined by a concerted campaign. In this ideological war, the notorious Frankfurt School has acted as the General Staff of the anti-Western forces.

Mr. Buchanan maintains that traditional Western values have been undermined by a concerted campaign.

Twentieth-century Marxists, especially in Western Europe, radically shifted the main focus of revolutionary doctrine. The Bolshevik Revolution succeeded in Russia, but elsewhere in Europe, armed violence against the existing order failed. "Nothing the Marxists had predicted had come to pass. Their hour had come and gone. The workers of the west, the mythical proletariat, had refused to play the role history had assigned them" (p. 74).

What was to be done? According to the great Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, Communism must inevitably fail so long as people retained their faith in traditional Christian values. "'The civilized world has been saturated with Christianity for 2000 years,' Gramsci wrote; and a regime grounded in Judeo-Christian beliefs and values could not be overthrown until these roots were cut" (p. 76, quoting Gramsci).

The task for revolutionaries is then obvious: they must undermine traditional values. To do so—and here precisely lies Gramsci's greatest originality—revolutionaries should not "seize power first and impose a cultural revolution from above" (p. 77). Rather, they must first change the culture. Through a "long march through the institutions," Christian values would be undermined. "Then the people could be slowly educated to understand and even welcome the revolution" (p. 77, quoting Gramsci).

Mr. Buchanan assigns a comparable role to another famous Marxist intellectual, the Hungarian Georg Lukács, but here I am unable entirely to follow him. Lukács stressed the role in revolution of a vanguard elite party. Though Lukács assigned intellectuals, himself not least among them, a principal role in the party, he did not stress a cultural strategy in the style of Gramsci. *His* revolution is very much a matter of force and violence.

But this is by the way. Gramsci led the way to cultural revolution; but, like Moses, he did not see the Promised Land. Another Marxist group, set up at Frankfurt University in 1923, carried

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

out the detailed attack on the values of the West.[1] The members of this group included its director, Max Horkheimer; Theodor Adorno; and, a younger figure who became notorious as an inspiration of the 1960s' New Left, Herbert Marcuse.

Our author focuses on the central doctrine of the group, Critical Theory. He rightly notes that this involves destructive criticism of Western civilization. "Under Critical Theory, one repeats and repeats that Western societies are history's greatest repositories of racism, sexism, nativism, xenophobia, homophobia, anti-Semitism fascism, and Nazism" (p. 80).

Buchanan's concise summary in fact understates the destructive character of the Frankfurt School approach. As Horkheimer and Adorno made clear in *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, logical thought and science are the principal enemies. They enslave people by confining them to the fixed patterns of the actual world. Instead, dialectical thought, termed by Marcuse the Power of Negative Thinking, must replace totalitarian rationality. Those in search of particulars about the New Rationality may encounter difficulties in their quest. Marcuse, e.g., endlessly tells us that true thought must be negative but offers little beyond this slogan.

[1]Buchanan incorrectly claims that Lukács helped found the Frankfurt School (p. 78). Also, Wilhelm Reich, who was a dissident psychoanalyst rather than a sociologist, was not a member of the Frankfurt School (p. 79).

A particular aspect of the Frankfurt School's destructive criticism especially concerns our author. *The Authoritarian Personality*, which Buchanan terms "by far the most influential book the Frankfurt School ever published," subjected traditional families to withering attack. "If a family is deeply Christian and capitalist, ruled by an authoritarian father, you may expect the children to grow up racist and fascist. . . . Where Marx criminalizes the capitalist class, the Frankfurt School criminalized the middle class" (p. 81).

Where Marx criminalizes the capitalist class, the Frankfurt School criminalized the middle class.

Here we at last approach the central thesis of Buchanan's book, and we shall very soon see why attacks on the traditional family concern him even more than other criticisms of Western values. But how successful is he in his contention that the ideas of the Frankfurt School have helped materially to bring about the changes he deplores? At the very least he has arrived at a very promising hypothesis.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

On one or two points, though, I think Buchanan's picture of the Frankfurt School needs to be modified. Adorno and Horkheimer, in their later years, became much more conservative than before; Buchanan could readily have taken over unchanged, e.g., Horkheimer's warnings against an Oriental invasion of the West. Their rightward turn led them to reject the New Left, a stance that embroiled them in conflict with their one-time disciple Marcuse. Further, I think Buchanan misses an irony in his discussion of *The Authoritarian Personality*. In spite of its criticisms of the Western family, the book was by no means radical in its method of investigation. Quite the contrary, Adorno here embraced the scientistic views he was so anxious elsewhere to deplore. The book, with its pretentious "F-scale" *et hoc genus omne*, expressed the purest positivism.[2]

Now at last to Buchanan's primary concern in the book. He of course believes that the traditional values subject to Frankfurt School attack are true; but his concern extends beyond the fact that many people have been induced to abandon correct doctrine. If traditional values no longer control behavior, women will be reluctant to bear children. Married families with only one or two children will be common, and some couples will have no children at all. Some women may decide against marriage altogether. Here disaster threatens. If the people of the United States and Western Europe fail adequately to reproduce, they will in the near future find themselves swamped by other nations.

Already the situation is dire: "While world population had doubled to six billion in forty years, the European peoples had stopped reproducing. Their populations had begun to stagnate and, in many countries, had already begun to fall. . . . In 1960, people of European ancestry were one-fourth of the world's population; in 2000, they were one-sixth; in 2050, they will be one-tenth. These are the statistics of a vanishing race" (pp. 11–12).

Now at last to Buchanan's primary concern in the book. If traditional values no longer control behavior, disaster threatens.

A related danger makes the situation even worse, from the perspective of the European peoples. Massive immigration of non-Europeans threatens to make the peoples of the West minorities in their own countries.

[2]Adorno's embrace of positivism proved temporary, and he soon reverted to his former opposition to mainstream social science.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"America is no longer the biracial society of 1960 that struggled to erase divisions and close gaps in a nation 90 percent white. Today we juggle the rancorous and rival claims of a multiracial, multiethnic, and multicultural country" (p. 141).

One of these rancorous claims especially disturbs our author. He contends, following the distinguished Harvard political scientist Samuel Huntington, that Mexican immigration poses a direct threat to national survival. Many Mexican immigrants view themselves as continuing citizens of their mother country; and they wish to detach California and large sections of the Southwest from the United States. "[T]he demographic sea change, especially in California, where a fourth of the population are foreign-born and almost a third are Latino, has spawned a new ethnic chauvinism. . . . Census 2000 revealed what many sensed. For the first time since statehood, whites in California are a minority" (pp. 128, 139).

One might object to Buchanan's line of thought in this way. Suppose he is entirely right in his depiction of population trends. Why does any of this matter? Is it not blatant racism to be preoccupied with whether European whites prevail over others?

Here we reach the essence of Mr. Buchanan's political worldview. As he sees matters, a nation must be unified in order to exist at all. "Some define a nation as one people of common ancestry, language, literature, history, heritage, heroes, traditions, customs, mores, and faith who have lived together over time on the same land under the same rulers" (p. 143). Although Buchanan does not embrace explicitly what he terms the "blood-and-soil-idea," his sympathies lie with it.

Given this definition, the response to our questions is apparent. A nation that allows alien groups entry has committed suicide. But is not the next step in the thrust and parry of argument equally obvious? Why does a nation need so all-embracing a unity as Buchanan has set forward? Is not America a country founded on common beliefs alone, not on ethnic unity?

Although Buchanan does not embrace explicitly what he terms the "blood-and-soil-idea," his sympathies lie with it.

Our author is not so easily put aside. He doubts that America meets even this less stringent criterion of unity: "We live in the same country, we are governed by the same leaders, but can we truly say we are still one nation and one people?" (p. 146).

Suppose that Mr. Buchanan is right: absent at least some degree of unity, a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nation must split apart. Why should we care about this? As classical liberals, are we not concerned with the liberties of individuals rather than the well-being of nations? If nations cannot cope with disunity, what is that to us?

As usual, our author is there ahead of us. He suggests, following John Stuart Mill, that free institutions are "next to impossible in a country made up of different nationalities" (p. 146).[3] Thus Buchanan says in effect to libertarians who spurn his nationalism, "You had better care about national unity. Without it you cannot have the kind of society you want."

Even if Mill is right, I do not think his point goes quite in the direction Buchanan wishes. Buchanan takes as given the United States in its existing scope and asks, what can be done to keep our nation together, given its extreme diversity? One might derive from Mill's view, though, a contrasting prescription: perhaps the United States should be divided into smaller, more homogeneous units.

No doubt our vehemently nationalist author would recoil from this alternative; he is convinced that in history, the battle goes to the large and powerful. (But need the powerful be large?) The argument is unlikely soon to end, and I close with a cautionary note.

Those inclined to nationalism should avoid a trap that has to some degree ensnared Buchanan. He sees capitalism as an obstacle to traditional values. "Many conservatives have succumbed to the heresy of *Economism*, a mirror-Marxism that holds that man is an economic animal, that free trade and free markets are the path to peace, prosperity, and happiness" (p. 37).

But why should belief in the free market lead one to abandon conservative values for what Buchanan, following Orestes Brownson, calls "Mammon worship"? Certainly Mises and Rothbard, the two foremost twentieth-century defenders of capitalism, knew as well as Buchanan that man is more than an economic animal.

Only a policy of complete free enterprise permits a society fully to embrace conservative values.

Is not the actual situation the reverse of that imagined by Buchanan? Only a policy of complete free enterprise permits a society fully to embrace conservative values. A society mired in problems caused by interventionist

[3]The context makes clear that Buchanan adopts Mill's view as his own.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and socialist measures cannot devote full attention to the pursuit of the true, the good, and the beautiful.

Buchanan might respond with an objection. Does not capitalism encourage unlimited immigration, since employers wish to drive down wages? Such mass movements of peoples, Buchanan has been at pains to argue, overthrow tradition. Whatever the interests of certain capitalists, it is by no means the case that advocates of economic freedom must embrace open borders. Hans Hoppe has made an excellent case to the contrary in his *Democracy—The God That Failed*, reviewed earlier in this issue. I venture to suggest that he is a sounder guide to economics than Brownson or Whittaker Chambers (p. 38). Pat Buchanan ably defends conservative values, but he needs to study further the works of the great Austrian School masters. ✦

Pat Buchanan ably defends conservative values, but he needs to study further the works of the great Austrian School masters.

Argument by Axiom

The Anatomy of Racial Inequality

Glenn C. Loury
Harvard University Press, 2002
xi + 226 pgs.

Critics of Austrian economics often attack it as "armchair economics." Instead of testable hypotheses, Mises and his followers offer us truths about the world based on allegedly self-evident axioms. Is this not, according to positivists, the very height of folly? One can discover facts only by investigation, not by conjuring them into existence.

Readers of *The Mises Review* will not be surprised that I find these criticisms mistaken. The axiom of action from which Mises begins really is a self-evident truth about the world and adequately grounds his science of praxeology. But if the positivists are wrong about the Austrians, they do have a point. Useful self-evident axioms are few and far between; and, usually, to obtain scientific knowledge requires empirical investigation.

Glenn Loury does not agree. He begins with a genuine problem: blacks in the United States lag behind whites in money, power, and social status. "Numerous indices of well-being—wages, unemployment rates, income and wealth levels, ability test scores,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

prison enrollment and crime victimization rates, health and mortality statistics—all reveal substantial racial disparities" (p. 4). The disparities are not much in doubt; but, like a good empiricist, Loury offers numerous charts and tables to document his statement (pp. 175–204).

Unfortunately, Loury's stay in the world of facts is of short duration. When it comes to explaining the black-white gaps, facts make a quick exit. Our author first clears the deck of competing hypotheses to his own. By far the most politically incorrect of these is that of innate racial differences in intelligence or character traits; Hernnstein and Murray's *The Bell Curve* is probably the best-known recent example of a work that adopts this view.

Loury dispatches this view by fiat. He tells us in his Axiom 2: "The enduring and pronounced social disadvantage of African Americans is not the result of any purportedly unequal innate human capacities of the 'races.' Rather, this disparity is a social artifact—a product of the peculiar history, culture and political economy of American society" (p. 5).

Surely this claim, whether true or not, is a contingent matter. Whether blacks are innately less intelligent than whites, or, for that matter, how Albanians compare with Basques is prima facie not a matter to be settled by prescription. In these days of officially mandated antiracism, I hasten to preclude a misunderstanding. I am not concerned to advocate any thesis about race. My point is purely one of method: one cannot settle controversial issues quite so easily as Loury imagines. One must admit, though, that Loury's approach has its merits. Is it not convenient to deal with opponents in this way: "Any criticism of what I say is wrong"?

Racial differences, then, are out: what then explains the gaps? One possibility is that whites discriminate against blacks. By this I mean that whites hold blacks consciously in contempt: an example of such discrimination is a "For Rent" sign that explicitly excludes blacks. Loury by no means rules out actions that stem from prejudice; but, as he recognizes, discrimination as a complete explanation of the gaps fails of its purpose. Discrimination against blacks has dramatically lessened in the recent past, yet the gaps persist.

Loury explains the point at issue succinctly: "[A]lthough the extent of overt racial discrimination against blacks has consciously declined over the last half-century, it seems to me equally obvious that racial injustice in U.S. social, economic, and political life

One cannot settle controversial issues quite so easily as Loury imagines.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

persists, though less transparently so, and in ways that are more difficult to root out" (p. 20).

Our author solves the problem of the gaps through other means. He appeals to a peculiarity in the ways whites perceive and classify blacks, rather than to an emotional aversion for them. In essence, he contends that whites expect blacks to behave in various undesirable ways. These expectations induce in whites certain reactive behavior; but these reactions by no means are founded on prejudice. Quite the contrary, the reactions display complete rationality—given the beliefs about blacks on which they are based.

An example will clarify Loury's point. "Suppose automobile dealers think black buyers have higher reservation prices than whites—prices above which they will simply walk away rather than haggle further. On this belief, dealers will be tougher when bargaining with blacks, more reluctant to offer low prices, more eager to foist on them expensive accessories, and so on" (p. 31–32). Here the actions of the dealers lead to worse results for black car buyers than for whites; but the actions stem, not from hatred of blacks, but rather from beliefs about how they act in the car market.

But if these beliefs do not reflect virulent prejudice, are they not irrational? Have not car dealers adopted unfounded views about the behavior of their black customers? No, says Loury. "Now, given that such race-based behavior by dealers is common, blacks will come to expect tough dealer bargaining as the norm when they shop for cars . . . the typical black buyer may find it rational to accept a price rather than continue searching elsewhere, even though the typical white may reject that same price" (p. 32).

The dealers, then, expect blacks to be less willing to bargain than whites, and so they prove to be. Yet the situation is hardly as it stands satisfactory. The beliefs of the dealers play a crucial role in bringing about the situation they depict. If dealers did not expect their black customers to be easy marks, they would more readily bargain with them. If so, blacks would respond in a different way, and no disparity between blacks and whites would arise.

> Is it not convenient to deal with opponents in this way: "Any criticism of what I say is wrong"?

As matters stand, then, blacks have fallen victim to the bad effects of a self-confirming stereotype. And the car market is but one of many examples of this malign mechanism: Loury sets forward ingenious examples of it, in fields ranging from taxi drivers' pickups to professional-school admissions. Our author has accomplished a remarkable

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

feat. He has solved the problem of the gaps, without having to bring in dubious claims of white prejudice. Or has he?

Let us return to the car market. The passage quoted above, explaining how blacks are victimized, has attached to it a footnote number. One might expect the footnote to refer to data that support his account, but it does not. He offers no evidence for his view that black behavior is an artifact of a self-confirming stereotype. Here our author is at any rate consistent. Nowhere in his book does Loury provide confirming evidence that his ingenious mechanism explains anything. At least he does not declare his view an axiom.

To his credit, Loury recognizes an objection to his analysis. Why do self-confirming stereotypes operate in so many instances to the disadvantage of blacks? His model assumes no initial group differences; rather, the expectations that one group has about another bring about the results they foresee. "If the racial markers are truly arbitrary, then why are the blacks so often on the short end of this process?" (p. 34).

No need for evidence—to ask for proof is to show oneself ignorant of what an axiom is.

Loury's response brings back the prejudice that he has so far rejected. Blacks in the United States were once slaves; and "slaves are always profoundly dishonored persons" (p. 69).[1] Because of this dishonor, whites tend to have negative expectations about blacks. Hence the objection fails. It is not at all anomalous that self-confirming stereotypes hurt blacks. Since whites viewed their slave ancestors with contempt, they hold unfavorable expectations about present-day blacks.

Our persistent question recurs. Let us grant Loury his assumption that slaves are seen as dishonorable. Why should this affect whites' views of blacks many generations removed from slavery? Once more we must inquire of him what data support his account.

And once more Loury stands at the ready. A glance at Axiom 3 answers our doubts: "An awareness of the racial 'otherness' of blacks is embedded in the social consciousness of the American nation owing to the historical fact of slavery and its aftermath. This inherited stigma even today exerts an inhibiting effect on the extent to which African Americans can realize their full potential" (p. 5).

And that is that. No need for evidence—to ask for proof is to show oneself ignorant of what an axiom is. Why waste further time? He can proceed apace to what I suspect is his real

[1]Here Loury relies on the "profound treatise *Slavery and Social Death*" by Orlando Patterson (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982), p. 68.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

aim: a defense of affirmative action. Does not justice demand that we exert ourselves to dissipate the stigma? Once blacks are entrenched in good positions, will not whites cease to hold negative expectations about them? If so, the cycle of self-confirming expectations will end, and all will be well.

By now, I hope that readers have been conditioned not to raise the following difficulty. Even if Loury is correct about both self-confirming stereotypes and racial stigma, it does not follow that affirmative action has good prospects of ending the gaps. Perhaps the stereotypes cannot be eradicated, at any costs at all realistic. What evidence has Loury in favor of his optimistic view?

The response is, I hope, obvious. What evidence? Should his view be questioned all Loury need do is to devise a new axiom. His method has, in Bertrand Russell's phrase, all the advantages of theft over honest toil.

The book is not without value. His notion of self-confirming stereotypes seems to me a promising hypothesis, though the evocation of racial stigma is no more than political propaganda.[2] Nevertheless, if I am right, grave and obvious methodological flaws disfigure the book. Why, then, do eminent academics accord it extravagant praise?

Kenneth Arrow tells us that "Loury has reoriented the discussion on black-white inequality" with his book. Michael Walzer says, "This is social criticism at its best." Cass Sunstein calls the book "fact-filled," without mentioning that the facts recounted in it lend no support for the book's principal contentions. (All quotations are from the book's dust jacket.)

What has happened? I should like to suggest a hypothesis of my own. Owing to the dishonor in which slaves were held, these academic eminences have low expectations about the work of black scholars. When a book by an African American appears with any ideas of value, so great is their surprise that they respond with hosannas. I have no evidence to support my view, but never fear—I assume it as an axiom. ✦

[2]His account of systems of justice closed to moral deviation (pp. 129–30) is also valuable.

War Laid Bare

9-11

Noam Chomsky
Seven Stories Press, 2001
125 pgs.

Writing in the Dust: After September 11

Rowan Williams
William B. Eerdmanns Publishing Company, 2002
xii + 78 pgs.

These two short books supplement each other and are best considered together. Mr. Chomsky is an assiduous collector of facts,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

many of them highly embarrassing to the U.S. government. Archbishop Williams, an Anglican theologian of great distinction, enables us to place these facts in a useful philosophical perspective.

The horrible events of September 11 have rightly aroused disgust with terrorism, a feeling that Chomsky fully shares. He calls the attack on the World Trade Center "a particularly horrifying terrorist crime" (p. 57). But he raises an uncomfortable question: "The U.S. is officially committed to what is called 'low-intensity warfare.' . . . If you read the standard definitions of low-intensity conflict and compare them with official definitions of 'terrorism' in army manuals, or the U.S. Code . . . you find they're almost the same. Terrorism is the use of coercive means aimed at civilian populations in an effort to achieve political, religious, or other aims" (p. 57).

What would the reaction have been if the bin Laden network had blown up half the pharmaceutical supplies in the U.S.?

Chomsky discusses a large number of cases in which the U.S. government has acted in a way that we rightly condemn when done to us. "Or take the destruction of the Al-Shifra pharmaceutical plant in Sudan, one little footnote in the record of state terrorism, quickly forgotten. What would the reaction have been if the bin Laden network had blown up half the pharmaceutical supplies in the U.S. and the facilities for replenishing them? We can imagine, though the comparison is unfair; the consequences are vastly more severe in Sudan" (p. 45). Other examples include U.S. support for Turkish suppression of the Kurds, and the blockade of Iraq that has helped to cause the death of "maybe half a million children, which is the price the Secretary of State [Madeleine Albright] says we're willing to pay" (p. 44).

Defenders of the present U.S. war on terrorism might respond that Chomsky's analogies are irrelevant. They might well lead us to question aspects of past and present American policy; but how does it follow from anything Chomsky has said that we should not now respond as we have done to the attacks of September 11?

To this Chomsky has two responses. First, the ferocious attack we have directed against Afghanistan carries with it dire consequences. "[T]ake the 'Northern Alliance' that the U.S. and Russia are now jointly supporting. This is mostly a collection of warlords who carried out such destruction and terror that much of the population welcomed the Taliban. . . . If the U.S. proceeds to join Russia in arming these forces heavily and launching some kind of offensive based on them, the drug flow is likely to increase under the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ensuing conditions of chaos and refugee flight" (p. 43). Perhaps even worse, the massive movements of refugees resulting from the war threaten large-scale starvation.

Further, Chomsky inquires, why cannot the U.S. response to September 11 proceed in accord with international law? Would it not have been better for the U.S. to present its evidence against the bin Laden network to an international legal forum, rather than take unilateral action?

If the U.S. is convinced it "has the goods" on bin Laden and his allies, why should it not respond with overwhelming force?

I do not think supporters of U.S. policy would be much moved by the latter consideration. Will they not say that Chomsky has an unrealistic, if touching, faith in the World Court? If the U.S. is convinced it "has the goods" on bin Laden and his allies, why should it not respond with overwhelming force?

Chomsky says of himself, quite truly, "I don't like to generalize" (p. 54); and Archbishop Rowan Williams, a scholar thoroughly familiar with the just-war tradition, offers a framework of principles that enables us to press Chomsky's case to its logical conclusion for policy. As Williams points out, two key problems with U.S. policy render it morally culpable.

To be justifiable, force must aim at a definite and realizable end; and American policy fails this test completely. "From the first, it was not at all clear what would count as victory in this engagement. The abolition of terrorism? No doubt; but what possible guarantee could there be that this had been achieved? . . . It is *just* possible to deplore civilian casualties and retain credibility when an action is clearly focused and its goals on the way to evident achievement. It is not possible when the strategy appears confused and political leaders talk about a 'war' that may last years" (Williams, p. 32).

A defensible end does not suffice. A just war also requires the use of proportionate means, and here once more American policy falls short. "[T]here is a fine line between . . . the crippling of military and aircraft installations and the devastating of an infrastructure with the half-formed aim of destroying morale. Combine that with the use of anti-personnel weapons such as cluster bombs . . . and the whole enterprise is tainted" (Williams, pp. 32–33).

When Williams's analysis is combined with Chomsky's depiction of the unscrupulous use of force by the United States in many instances, one

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

conclusion is evident. Though a response to September 11 in line with justice was possible, the United States failed to undertake it. Its disproportionate actions, however unfortunate, should come as no surprise to students of the recent past. ✦

Let God Sort Them Out

Warrior Politics: Why Leadership Demands a Pagan Ethos

Robert D. Kaplan
Random House, 2002
xxii + 198 pgs.

The dust jacket of Mr. Kaplan's book made me suspicious. Henry Kissinger, that vest-pocket Bismarck,[1] calls the book "one of the most thought-provoking and profound . . . that I have ever read." John Gray, whom I have reviewed several times in these pages with incomplete sympathy, concurs: he speaks of a "profound and timely meditation." If these people praised the book, I thought, it must be deeply flawed.

Of course these suspicions did not disturb my complete objectivity; nevertheless, they proved entirely well founded. Mr. Kaplan begins with an engaging premise. The study of the classics of political philosophy has great value; the wisdom found in these books still very much has point today. But what he derives from his very selective looks at these classics is nothing short of horrendous.

We learn from Machiavelli, our author holds, that in foreign affairs morality must take a back seat to self-preservation. "Machiavelli believed that because Christianity glorified the meek, it allowed the world to be dominated by the wicked: he preferred a pagan ethic that elevated self-preservation over the Christian ethic of sacrifice, which he considered hypocritical" (p. 52). Whether Kaplan endorses every jot and tittle of Machiavelli's view I do not presume to say; but the entire book makes emphatically clear that he thinks Christian morality irrelevant to foreign policy.

Let us see how well Mr. Kaplan's pagan ethos works in practice. Rather than select examples of my own, I shall let our author put his best foot forward. What does *he* consider the triumphs of

The entire book makes emphatically clear that he thinks Christian morality irrelevant to foreign policy.

[1] I adapt this from M.F. Sciacca's phrase for Bertrand Russell: a vest-pocket Voltaire.

 LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Abraham Lincoln, "the ultimate prince" of course, counts as an exemplar of the pagan ethos.

an ethics that spurns moral absolutes and instead seeks self-preservation?

His list is not without a certain macabre interest. "In 1988, during the Palestinian Intifada, Israel's defense minister, Yitzhak Rabin, reportedly told Israeli soldiers to 'go in and break their bones,' referring to Palestinian protestors. . . . Rabin's actions were condemned by American liberals. . . . Once elected prime minister, Rabin used his new power to make peace with the Palestinians and Jordanians" (pp. 52–53). If one looks at the present situation in the Middle East, I cannot think Rabin's Machiavellian course of action an entire success.

Unfortunately, Kaplan has not yet finished. "A famous example of good public virtue and bad private virtue might be Franklin Delano Roosevelt's somewhat mischievous evasions of truth in getting an isolationist Congress to approve the Lend-Lease Act in 1941" (p. 56). What is supposed to be so virtuous about Roosevelt's efforts, against the wishes of the majority that had elected him, to embroil us in world war?

Abraham Lincoln, "the ultimate prince" of course, counts as an exemplar of the pagan ethos. "Lincoln was sufficiently ruthless to target the farms, homes, and factories of Southern civilians in the latter phase of the Civil War. Thus Lincoln reunited the temperate zone of North America, preventing it from falling prey to European powers and creating a mass society under uniform laws" (p. 61). Uniform laws are worth a great deal of bloodshed, are they not?

Kaplan praises Machiavellian virtue as a source of compromise. Because it recognizes that values are plural, it avoids the religious fanaticism that insists on imposing the supposed will of God on the recalcitrant. But if Lincoln and Roosevelt count as Machiavellians in good standing, Kaplan's favored policy often leads to ideological crusades and mass death. May we not say that, in Karl Popper's term, his hypothesis has been falsified?

But must we not acknowledge that Kaplan's case has some merit? If foreign policy is governed by strict standards of morality, then will there not be endless interventions wherever human rights are violated? If we reject Kaplan, we seem committed to the "moralism" famously condemned by George Kennan. Unless, like the "Christian Realist" Reinhold Niebuhr, we temper morality with considerations of self-interest and power, we seem doomed to futile Wilsonian crusades.

This argument rests on a false premise. Why should we assume that morality requires frequent intervention

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in foreign affairs? I should have thought the traditional American foreign policy of nonintervention much closer to the demands of ordinary morality. Do not the requirements of just-war theory rule out ideological interventions? In practice, few wars except those of self-defense meet the stringent standards of this view.

The principles of just-war theory set requirements for all nations, even in a world where most countries flout them.

Kaplan responds that just-war theory is outdated. "[Hugo] Grotius's 'just war' presupposed the existence of a Leviathan—the pope or the Holy Roman Emperor—to enforce a moral code. But in a world without a universal arbiter of justice, discussions of war as 'just' or 'unjust' carry little meaning beyond the intellectual and legal circles in which such discussions take place" (p. 130). This comment displays a complete misunderstanding of the just-war tradition. This view is precisely not a version of legal positivism, in which a valid law must be promulgated by a sovereign power. The principles of just-war theory set requirements for all nations, even in a world where most countries flout them.

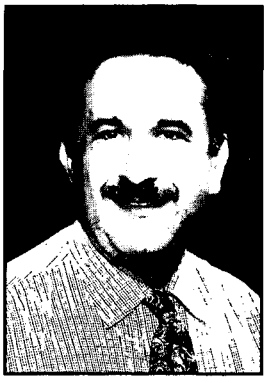
Our author has yet another argument to bring in support of his "pagan ethos" in foreign relations, this one an old warhorse. In a discussion of Kant, he contrasts a morality of intention with a morality of consequences. (Oddly, he does not refer to Max Weber's famous essay on this topic.) Are not proponents of abstract justice concerned only with personal integrity, ignoring the effects of the rules they support? "What if goodwill leads to disastrous results?" (p. 112).

Once more Kaplan has misapprehended the principal alternative to his position. Advocates of just war do not embrace a theory according to which purity of intention is all that matters. Quite the contrary, their doctrine offers very concrete guidance for particular situations. If Kaplan here responds that the precepts of this theory can result in disastrous outcomes, is not the burden on him to give us some examples?

Those concerned with bad consequences would do better to pay attention to Kaplan's approach. He favors an American empire: "The power of this new imperium will derive from its never having to be declared, saving it from the self-delusive, ceremonial trappings of the United Nations" (p. 148). Of course our empire will be benevolent, since its military is "demonstrably multiethnic." I am glad of the news. ✦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

David Gordon, who writes *The Mises Review*, is a senior fellow at the Mises Institute. He was educated at UCLA, where he earned his Ph.D. in intellectual history. He is the author of *Resurrecting Marx: The Analytical Marxists on Exploitation, Freedom, and Justice; The Philosophical Origins of Austrian Economics; Critics of Marx;* and *An Introduction to Economic Reasoning*. He is also editor of *Secession, State, and Liberty* and co-editor of H.B. Acton's *The Morals of Markets and Other Essays*. Dr. Gordon is a contributor to such journals as *Analysis, The International Philosophic Quarterly, The Journal of Libertarian Studies,* and *The Quarterly Journal of Austrian Economics*.



Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____ Email _____

I enclose a check for $ _____ ($16 for 4 issues; $25 int'l.) or please charge my credit card: ❑ Visa ❑ MasterCard ❑ Discover ❑ Diners Club

Card No. _____

Signature: _____ Exp.: Mo/Yr _____

Ludwig von Mises Institute, 518 West Magnolia Avenue
Auburn, Alabama 36832-4528
(334) 321-2100; fax (334) 321-2119
info@mises.org; www.mises.org

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The
MISES REVIEW

LUDWIG VON MISES INSTITUTE
518 West Magnolia Avenue
Auburn, Alabama 36832-4528

Non-Profit Org.
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
Ludwig von Mises Institute

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED